

World Pangolin Day 2015
Roundtable on Pangolin Conservation Challenges in Nepal



21 February, 2015

Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal



Introduction:

Nepal is home for two types of Asian pangolins; Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) and Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) (Baral and Shah, 2008) which are mostly in central and eastern region (Shrestha, 2003). Chinese Pangolins are nationally protected species (GoN,1973) so hunting is prohibited in Nepal but still, the poaching and illegal trade is increased eight fold in last five years (Paudel, 2015). Pangolins are the least studied burrowing mammals in the world including Nepal. In 2014, IUCN had made an effort to mapping out potential distribution range of Pangolin in Nepal that shows its distribution extending from alluvial flat Terai to the vertex up to the mid-hill (Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Potential distribution of Pangolin in Nepal (IUCN, 2014)

Recently, IUCN Pangolin Specialist Group assessed on the status of Pangolin (Challender, Waterman, & Baillie Jonathan 2014) and classified the Chinese Pangolin as Critically Endangered and Indian Pangolins as endangered ones; both enlisted as 'Protected' by the Government of Nepal under the shield of the National Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act (1973). Though protected; scientific status of Pangolin is yet least known in Nepal.

Pangolin habitats are mostly outside the Protected Areas (PAs) are severely degraded due to urban and semi-urban development; forest fragmentation & degradation; unregulated over grazing, etc. So they are being constantly threatened from anthropogenic behaviors. Poaching and trade is becoming main threat for not only the decline of Pangolin's population but the survival. If current trend of poaching/trade continue to happen there will be a remarkable decline of >90% of Pangolin population over the next 21 years or 3 generations from now (Challender & MacMillan 2014).

Nepal has made appreciable progresses in conserving large mammals and birds but still unknown about the pangolins. Hence, the first ever roundtable meeting organized to discuss "Pangolin Conservation Challenges in Nepal" on the occasion of World Pangolin Day 2015. The meeting brought together government, civil societies, academic institutions, researchers and students to discuss the challenges in pangolin conservation in Nepal. This report provides a summary of the discussions and the recommendations made by the roundtable.

Chinese Pangolin Conservation in Nangkholyang and Dokhu Villages of Taplejung district, Nepal

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Abstract

Chinese pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*) also known as scaly ant eaters are least studied and poorly known critically endangered species listed in appendix II of CITES with zero annual export quota. Population is declining on an alarming rate as the illegal trade of pangolin is rather high than Tigers, Rhinos and Elephants. National Trust for Nature Conservation in support of Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered fellowship program of Zoological Society of London implemented Chinese pangolins conservation project in Nangkholyang and Dokhu villages of Taplejung district in eastern Himalayas of Nepal. Eastern Himalayas is one of the biodiversity hotspot. Information on status, distribution, ecology and drivers of population decline are collected walking through human and grazing trails, deploying camera traps and interviewing local communities. To control illegal trade and to raise public awareness we established pangolin conservation committees and sub-committees in the villages. A total of 192 males and 71 females are affiliated in pangolin conservation work through these conservation committees. School teaching program, community meetings, group discussions, district and national level workshops were conducted to raise public awareness on pangolin conservation. Pangolins were captured on camera trap and burrows were recorded widely throughout the study area. Illegal trade is found to be more serious than we thought before implementation of the project. Community based conservation can be efficient conservation approach if we being able to ensure direct and indirect benefit of pangolin conservation to the local communities. Pangolins are worth alive than dead for local and regional communities.

Key Words: Habitat, Distribution, Conservation Education, Awareness

An Overview on Illegal Trade of Pangolins in Araniko-trail

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Abstract

Poaching and trade is a growing challenge to Pangolin conservation. Being a host of Indian Pangolin and Chinese Pangolin, Nepal acts as both a source-country and as a transitional hub for pangolin parts and their derivate. Well-established channels through Nepal to Tibet deliver pangolins to China, the Middle East and South East Asian markets. However, there has been relatively little effort to systematically study patterns or trends in pangolin trade through Nepal. This paper explores the shifting patterns of the illegal pangolin trade based on six years (2009-2014) of wildlife seizure data compiled from national newspapers, Nepal's Police, District Forest Office, Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation, and from records of conservation organizations. These suggest a possible shift in trade from species widely-recognized as threatened by trade (e.g., Tiger, Asian Elephant, and One Horned Rhinoceros) to other species, with dramatic increases in seizures of Pangolin, Red panda, Common Leopard, and Eurasian Eagle owl. This trend, however, could also represent changing enforcement strategies, and greater awareness of trade in pangolin and other species which are mainly outside of the protected areas. Seizure records have limitations for researchers, but given the severe lack of information on illegal trade and challenges of collecting primary data, they are also a valuable, under-utilized dataset. There is a clear benefit to improving the collection of seizure records, including by expanding them so baseline data is collected when seizures are made, such as on suspected origin and destination of wildlife and on the participants involved in trade. Controlling the illegal pangolin harvest and trade, particularly outside the protected areas, is a mounting challenging. There is a need not only for systematic evaluation to improve enforcement, as well as to better explore non-enforcement to save world's critically endangered pangolins.

Key Words: Pangolin, Poaching, Trade, Enforcement

Pangolin Conservation Challenges in Nepal

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Abstract

Nepal homes two species of pangolins: Chinese Pangolin and Indian Pangolin. Both are globally threatened to extinction. Both are protected by inclusion in National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973. Pangolins are shy, harmless & are the only mammal with scales thus are evolutionary unique. Being not attractive as other flagship species such as Rhino, Tiger and Elephant, pangolins have been least prioritized & neglected nationally & globally. Notably, illegal trade in pangolins and their derivatives continues to be widespread in and around the world bringing them in the brink of extinction. In Nepal, people perceive pangolin products to hold magical powers and ability to cure numerous illnesses and are eaten with great delicacy. Besides, poaching remains a significant threat to pangolins and it is being accelerated by illegal trade, forest exploitation, forest fire and encroachments. Lack of ecological knowledge and its status in rural communities and non-functional government are causing its survival in peril. Therefore, the only potential mechanism is to engage the local communities in establishing community-based pangolin conservation programs through tangible benefits to them. There is a dire need of sufficient funding to run and boost up the community initiatives for the patrol-based monitoring at sites with high pangolin densities, massive conservation education and certainty of effective and sustainable alternatives options for the people who used to search and kill pangolins.

Key Words: Community, Conservation, Awareness

Recommendations:

The five-point recommendation made by the Roundtable are as follows:

1. Document distribution, status and threat of pangolins in Nepal;
2. Identify pangolins strongholds and set-up community based pangolin conservation pocket areas;
3. Increase widespread pangolin conservation awareness focusing grass-root communities;
4. Formulate national conservation action plan of pangolin
5. Ensure effective law enforcement and anti-poaching mechanisms

Participants:

The roundtable was actively attended by more than 65 pangolin conservation enthusiasts including Director General of DNPWC, Member secretary of NTNC, Directors of WWF Nepal, Professors, Researchers, university students and representatives from various organizations. The complete list of the participants are as follows:

| SN.Name | Organization |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Ambika Pd. Khatiwada | NTNC |
| 2 Anish Shrestha | Greenhood Nepal |
| 3 Anita Dandekhya | IoF, Pokhara |
| 4 Asha Thapa | BBC Media Action |
| 5 Ashish Tripathi | IoF, Pokhara |
| 6 Bibasha Khadgi | Student |
| 7 Bijaya Raj Paudyal | NFA |
| 8 Binita Rimal | Tri-chandra |
| 9 BK Dalit | TNW |
| 10 Buddhi Biswokarma | Radio Himalaya |
| 11 Deepa Rayamaghi | Greenhood Nepal |
| 12 Deepak Sundas | Greenhood Nepal |
| 13 Elson Thapa | Kadambari College |
| 14 Ghana S. Gurung | WWF Nepal |
| 15 Govinda Gajurel | NTNC |
| 16 Gyan Neupane | Nagarik Daily |
| 17 Ichchha Thapa | CDES, TU |

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|----|----------------------|-----------------|----|------------------------|------------------|
| 18 | Injina Panthi | Greenhood Nepal | 37 | Pradeep Basyal | Greenhood Nepal |
| 19 | Jeevan Rai | FON | 38 | Pratima Bhandari | Student |
| 20 | Jyoti Aryal | Tri-chandra | 39 | Prativa Kaspal | Himalayan Nature |
| 21 | Kalyan Dahal | CAS College | 40 | Prava Pandey | NRDEPC |
| 22 | Khatri Raj Khatiwada | CDES, TU | 41 | Prof.Karan B. Shrestha | |
| 23 | Kumar Paudel | Greenhood Nepal | | Himalayan Nature | |
| 24 | Kumod Lekhak | CDES, TU | 42 | Purna Man Shrestha | Zoology, TU |
| 25 | Mohan K.C. | REDD Centre | 43 | Radha Shrestha | Tri-chandra |
| 26 | Monroon Pokhrel | | 44 | Radha Wagle | MoFSC |
| 27 | Mukesh Rai | Greenhood Nepal | 45 | Rajan K.C. | Greenhood Nepal |
| 28 | Nabin Khadka | RIA | 46 | Ramesh Dulal | DoF |
| 29 | Nabin Nepali | CDES, TU | 47 | Rangita Thapa | CDES, TU |
| 30 | Namrata Bhandari | CDES, TU | 48 | Rejina Khanal | Tri-chandra |
| 31 | Naresh Kusi | FON | 49 | Reshu Bashyal | CDES, TU |
| 32 | Naresh Subedi | NTNC | 50 | Roman Raut | ICU |
| 33 | Neha Khanal | KU | 51 | Rukka Bhattra | Tri-chandra |
| 34 | Nimisha Karki | KU | 52 | Sabin Sharma | Rajdhani Daily |
| 35 | Padam Bdr. Budha | CDES, TU | 53 | Sanjay Chhetri | ICU |
| 36 | Pema Sherpa | IoF Pokhara | 54 | Sanjay Paudel | RIA |
| | | | 55 | Santosh Karki | CDES, TU |
| | | | 56 | Shant Raj Jnawali | WWF Nepal |
| | | | 57 | Shiva Shrestha | Greenhood Nepal |
| | | | 58 | Siddhanta Pandey | RIA |
| | | | 59 | Sujata Awal | Khwopa |
| | | | 60 | Suman Acharya | IoF, Pokhara |
| | | | 61 | Suman Rai | Student |
| | | | 62 | Susank Dahal | RIA |
| | | | 63 | Tikaram Adhikari | DNPWC |
| | | | 64 | Unnati Simkhada | Tri-chandra |